quarrels ended in Pine Mountain's lofty ridges.

Big Dan stored his tobacco crop in the rickety log barn to dry. It was a fine crop. The leaves were big and brown, and silky. Crops like that did not happen very often.

The short autumn days flew swiftly, leaves began to fall. The mountains were shedding their gaudy fall dress for their white winter overcoats.

On this day a heavy rain was falliing—a rain that was cold and hard, nearly sleet. Big Dan was two miles from home. He cursed and clutched his rifle tightly as he slipped and slid in the sticky red clay.

Suddenly he stopped.

From just ahead there came the sharp crash of a rifle. The echo rolled back from the ridgetop.

Big Dan left the path. He picked his way in a wide circle through the dense underbrush. He paused every few moments to listen. People didn't shoot on days like that unless they were after big game.

A few moments later he stood hidden at the top of the winding path. His sharp grey eyes caught a movement down below.

He finally picked out a man lying on the pathway. A yard or so above him lay a big black hat. Even from where he stood Big Dan could see the large holes a few inches above the brim. Big Dan gasped. The man below him was Tait.

Tait was watching something up the hill side. Big Dan couldn't see anyone but he sensed that it must be Mark Benton. Mark shouldn't have missed that first shot.

Suddenly Tait moved. His rifle crashed loudly.

The old mountaineer gasped. From a spot directly below him a form came tumbling from behind a tree. That twisted grotesque shape could not harbor life.

Tait fired once more into the huddle of black that had lodged in a clump of sumach. Smoke still curled from his rifle as he walked a pace or two forward and stooped for the black hat.

Big Dan raised his rifle. He poked it between the low hanging limbs of an oak. For a second his eyes traveled over the long barrel. He pulled the trigger.

Rain beat into the open hat, filled the crown, and ran out through the big holes close to the brim just inches from the still hand that reached for it.

Big Dan clumped into his cabin. He warmed his hands at the fire. He cleaned the last trace of dirt from the rifle barrel.

He sat thinking for a while. Suddenly he muttered, "Hit was too good a crop to waste on a killer."

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SAND CASTLES

Today
I built my castles
On the sand.
The tide came in
And the sky was gray.
The waves
Swooped and roared
And crashed and surged
And overwhelmed my castles.
Soon
Only a shapeless mass
Lay sodden on the beach.
But
Although I know
That ever the waves return,
That ever
The pounding hoofs
Of the foam-flecked sea horses
Rush to destroy,
I shall build my castles
Again.
Tomorrow.

—LOUISE DAUNER.